

## NO PUBLIC CIA HEARING

It is difficult to figure out just what the House Rules Committee had in mind when it authorized public hearings on American intelligence activities. Of one thing all responsible officials in Washington should be agreed on, and that is a large amount of discretion in how such sensitive matters are handled.

If the Central Intelligence Agency committed a blunder in its estimate of the Cuban invasion then certainly some revisions should be made. The point is, however, that lots of folks in Washington were to blame for that flop—not just Allen Dulles.

Therefore, there is no sound reason for a public witch-hunt of our biggest cloak-and-dagger agency. President Kennedy himself has assumed the blame for whatever shortcomings the U. S. was guilty of in the Cuba case. It is reported that he is furious with CIA officials as well as with some members of the brass ring in the Pentagon. It is expected he will have a general housecleaning before the year is out.

Even so, House leaders are quick to see the danger of any public airing of our intelligence activity. Congressional inquiry has a place in the wake of intelligence goofs in Cuba. Such inquiry should be held in executive session. Such testimony as

will be heard should be privileged. The public has no real reason for wanting to turn the spotlight on such matters; it could only do harm.

President Kennedy put his finger on the matter when he said: "Our whole intelligence effort must be reviewed and its coordination with other elements of policy assured. But this is not a matter on which public discussion is useful."

Past requests for probes of intelligence operations have been rejected on the grounds the subject matter could involve a danger to national security. Allen Dulles has already testified about the Cuban invasion to the Senate subcommittee on Latin-American affairs. Such an inquiry is certain to be held now, particularly after the Cuban affair, plus the French military coup in Algeria, of which our CIA knew nothing.

But even if an inquiry is ordered, it is certainly hoped it will be conducted in utmost secrecy, for the efficiency and future operations of our espionage networks may depend on how well we keep their procedures from becoming known to the Russians. A widely-publicized controversial hearing could do our intelligence branch more harm than 20 years of enemy infiltration.